



CEDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

October 26, 2022

Committee Members Present

George Ambriz, Berkshire Community College
Roger Bolton, Williams College (Retired)
Kyle Hanlon, BRPC, CEDS Chair
Lesley Herzberg, Berkshire County Historical Society at Arrowhead
Ben Lamb, 1Berkshire
Paul Mattingly, MassHire Workforce Board
Shannon Smith, Berkshire Agricultural Ventures
Chris Rembold, Town of Great Barrington
Laurie Mick, PERC
Keith Girouard, Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network

Committee Alternates Present

Justine Dodds, City of Pittsfield
Kevin Pink, 1Berkshire

Not Present

Ben Sosne, Berkshire Innovation Center
Jim Lovejoy, Town of Mt. Washington
Debra Sarlin, Berkshire Community College
Mike Nuvalle, City of North Adams
Mike Coakley, City of Pittsfield
John Duval, Town of Adams/BRPC Commission Chair
A.J. Enchill, Berkshire Black Economic Council
Ian Rasch, Alander Construction

BRPC Staff Present

Tom Matuszko, BRPC Executive Director
Laura Brennan, Economic Development Program Manager
Wylie Goodman, Senior Economic Development Planner
Mark Maloy, GIS, Data, and IT Manager

Guests Present

Mark Siegers, Lanesborough resident
James Garzone, Great Barrington resident

I. Call to Order

Kyle H. called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes from September 21, 2022

George R moved to approve the minutes. Ben L seconded. During a roll call vote, Laurie M., Keith G., and Chris R. abstained. The minutes were approved.

III. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

IV. 2023-2027 Berkshire County CEDS

a. Priority Projects – approval of remaining submissions

The group was presented with the seven remaining priority projects. Five were repeat projects from former CEDS (page 41).

Ben L. moved to approve the five repeat projects. Chris R. seconded the motion. Chris R. explained that the previously approved Berkshire Cottages project (submitted by the CDCSB) represents redevelopment of the balance of the site formerly known as New England Log Homes and thus the New England Log Homes project can now be removed because it is redundant and is replaced by Berkshire Cottages. Ben L. was asked to amend his motion from five to four projects: Through roll call vote the four repeat projects were approved. The motion passed.

Two new projects from North Adams were presented. Laura B. provided a brief update about these two: Heritage State Park and North Adams Public Safety Complex. She noted from the last meeting that there was a decision about Public Safety and Municipally Owned projects being grouped together. The North Adams Public Safety Complex will be listed in the Appendix and be included alongside the Williamstown Fire and Pittsfield Police Stations. A summary of is on page 92 of the current draft. Ben L. made a motion to approve the North Adams Public Safety Complex. Roger B. seconded. Through roll call vote all approved.

The Heritage State Park is a new proposal falling under mixed-use site redevelopment (page 100). It was submitted by the City of North Adams. Through roll call vote the motion passes. The site includes eight structures. There are significant structural issues and repairs needed for the buildings, but the site has strong development potential either from being sold to a private developer or through shared ownership with the city or a long-term lease arrangement. It's location and scale still make it a strongly viable project. Roger B. made a motion to approve. Chris R. seconded. Kyle H. abstained due to his role on the North Adams Redevelopment Authority. Keith G. also abstained due to his separate connection to the site. The motion was approved through roll call vote.

b. Public comment period - general input to date

The period for the draft CEDS to receive public comments began in mid-October and runs through November 12. A press release was distributed and BRPC has sent emails to approximately 150 individual stakeholders that may be interested in providing input and led them to points in the document where they can suggest additional recommendations. Comments can be emailed directly to Laura B. We have received some comments so far.

c. Action Plan input

Action Plan Input begins on pg. 37 and follows core CEDS goals. Laura B. explained the online forms set up for people to suggest additional action items. Mike N. Ben L. and Thomas Grady of Pittsfield have

suggested new action items. Entities have framed action items in the form of “We have committed to” That format is helpful because it provides a reality check as to what partners are committing to and serves as a touchstone for performance measurements in the intervening years. BRPC thus far has received 12 suggestions for new action items.

d. Resiliency Recommendations input

We have also received additional resiliency recommendations from Laurie M. and Ben L. We will use feedback over the course of public comment period to identify redundancies and edit accordingly and/or reach out to partners to see if we can add their name to another item already identified. People can also send items for both action and resiliency directly to Laura B. Roger B. suggested that we include mention of the agency responsible for reports as part of hyperlinks and noted that going to links may be slow. Chris R. asked about Action Plan Objectives beginning on page 37 and whether they are in addition to the bullets on page 35 and 36. Sometimes they are fleshing out vs. adding to a bullet or taking it to a level of measurability. Laura B. explained that as we frame action items those end up becoming our performance measures from EDA’s perspective. The question being posed is, “How are we doing and what is the representative activity in the region in pursuit of those action items?”

e. Homeowner Surveys – Mark Maloy

Mark M. provided an overview of results from the homeowner surveys BRPC conducted in Spring and have now been filtered to understand the differences between two different groups (second homeowners and everyone who purchased a home since the pandemic – 2.5 years of movers). High-level results include:

1. Second homeowners overall are wealthy, educated, and white and come from major urban areas (NYC) and have a home in Berkshire County mostly for cultural activities and scenic beauty and outdoor recreation. Most have owned their home for over 20 years, but a significant number purchased during the pandemic.
2. Over 50% are still employed full-time outside the county. The next biggest group are retirees, of which 20% are self-employed, which is a higher % than the county overall. Many of these workers are in remote-only situations but expect work to become more on-site or hybrid in the next few months. Most continued to use their Berkshire County home as a second home but 10% moved in to make their Berkshire County home their primary residence.
3. Approximately 20% of those who relocated permanently or expect to do so in the next 5-15 years will be retired. Most are still working are likely to be -part-time with existing employers outside the county.
4. For those who recently moved – they tended to be wealthy, educated, and white with an average age of 55 and purchased a single-family home for personal use. About 50% of respondents are using their property year-round while 45% are using as a second home.
5. Of first-time homebuyers, 25% came from Berkshire County. Those buying from outside the county are mostly from greater NYC or elsewhere in MA, more so than second homeowners, they are from Boston and Eastern, MA. Many planned to purchase prior to the pandemic but 40% decided to buy due to the pandemic. Those from outside the county mostly bought in the southern half of the county and have higher incomes and bought more expensive property. Those who bought from outside plan to use it primarily as a second home. Most new homeowners are employed full-time but with employers outside the county. Most are planning for renovations, but the workers may not be here. Few have interest in expansion, just renovation.
6. The sample size for the findings is based on 8-10% of those sent surveys (14K people were sent the with 9K second homeowners and 4-5K recent movers with some overlap). Although not statistically significant, Mark M. felt the results were nonetheless representative.

James G. – an attending second homeowner who purchased in the last several years - said that everything in the report is true in his experience. Mark M. offered for people to contact him directly if they have questions or can read the report online. There was further discussion regarding items the report did not discuss such as those using housing for rental and the shortage of tradespeople.

f. CEDS Committee Endorsement

There will still be amendments made because the public comment period is still open, but there is a meeting of the BRPC Commission on 11/17/22. If the CEDS Committee endorses today it allows Laura B. to make edits without additional committee approvals. The group could provisionally endorse today and allow BRPC staff to put the next draft in front of the Commission on 11/17, or we schedule another convening to look at a final version after 11/17. Either option leaves time to submit to EDA by the end of December. Chris R. made a motion to endorse the CEDS draft document provided today and recommend the Executive Committee accept it with final edits to be reviewed and approved by the CEDS Committee in December. Roger B. seconded. Through roll call vote all approved. The motion passed.

g. Commission Endorsement, EDA Submission process

Laura B. shared subsequent endorsement steps and submissions. Wylie G. spoke about the need for photos for the report and encouraged people to upload them to a Google Drive. After submitting to EDA, we will be creating a social media toolkit to ensure the CEDS isn't kept on a shelf. The Google Drive link for photos can be found here:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1F6rPNVPXTyBUQQ6iM2eTSmbcO1Nj-tao?usp=sharing>.

VI. Adjournment

Keith G. made a motion to adjourn. Ben L. seconded. Through roll call vote the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.